# Book Reviews

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# Reviews

BENJAMIN ELIJAH MAYS, SCHOOLMASTER OF THE MOVEMENT: A Biography. By Randal Maurice Jelks. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 2012.

In this important work, historian Randal Maurice Jelks provides a chronological and intimate account of the person, life, and writings of Benjamin Elijah Mays up until the publication of Mays's autobiography, *Born to Rebel*, in 1971. Jelks intelligently investigates the foundations and origins of May's ideas and worldview. He establishes the connection between Mays's contributions to the Civil Rights movement and his embrace of Prophetic Christianity and Progressive Protestant Theology, and Ghandi's nonviolent philosophy and practice and his commitment to peacemaking and racial unity through nonviolent tactics and strategies. These ideas, especially Prophetic Christianity, according to the author, had played a central role in Mays's activist life to challenge America's racism, inequality, and racial segregation.

Jelks's *Benjamin Elijah Mays, Schoolmaster of the Movement: A Biography* is one of the significant studies on the theologian, activist, and the pioneer of the Civil Rights movement Benjamin Elijah Mays (1894-1984). The author presents Benjamin Elijah Mays as a public servant, an engaging public intellectual-activist and cultural critic, an educator, a theologian, and most importantly the pioneer of the civil rights movement. Yet, Jelks highlights the interconnections between these various roles that Mays played and underscores how each one complemented each other in Mays's unyielding quest for the idea of a just democratic social order and social justice and equality on behalf of the African American population.

More importantly, Jelks attempts to bridge both the historical and intellectual gaps between Martin Luther King Jr. and Benjamin Elijah Mays, whom King had considered as a father. Current scholarship on the Civil Rights Movement have

failed to acknowledge and explore this important dimension. Hence, Jelks's work filled the gaps by accentuating Mays' significant role in relationship to this historic event in American history and the black experience. Jelks describes the relationship between Mays and King like father and son (200–211). In many and various ways, he establishes the manifold influence of Mays upon the young King as his spiritual mentor, a leader of the Civil Rights Movement, and King as an intellectual-activist. Jelks remarks, "Mays, as King testified, had been significant in his life and influential in his calling to be a Baptist minister. Mays was also one of the clergy members who listened to his trial sermon and ordained him" (201). In addition, he asserts, "When King decided to attend seminary in 1948, at the age of nineteen, it was Mays who had written a key recommendation on King's behalf…During King's doctoral studies at Boston University, his academic inquiry focused on the question of God. King paid homage to Mays by writing a dissertation along similar lines as Mays's dissertation, comparing the concepts of God in the respective theologies of Edgar Sheffield Brightman and Henry Wieman" (201).

Furthermore, Jelks has brilliantly analyzed the close relationship between Mays's religious life—his theological training in Liberal theology and Christian progressivism, political theology, and the influence of the Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch at Bates College and then the University of Chicago—and his secular vocation and vision. For the author, Mays was profoundly influenced by "the faith of his mother" (42), which served as a driven force in his understanding of Christian activism and responsibility to society as a whole, the idea of "the just society," his work on race relations and correspondingly, his relentless fight against anti-black racism, white violence, and public segregation in American society. As the author remarks, "Mays's formative religious ethics held that everyone was equal in the eyes of God . . . Mays always held on to his mother's belief about the equality of persons before God as counter to the racist image he received in the wider society" (44). It is good to inform the reader that previous studies on Mays and the Civil Rights Movement have not made this clear connection between Mays's religious worldview, social activism, and his fight for racial inclusion, black freedom and civil rights in a country that refuses to affirm black humanity and dignity. From this angle, Jelks's contribution to Civil Rights scholarship as well as African American religion underscores the significance of faith in public life and the influence of black religion in this historic movement in America's experiment with democracy. Jelks insists that "Liberal theology provided [Mays] an intellectual and ethical framework for his Christian thinking and activism . . . and that Christianity was not merely an opiate but socially relevant" (45-6). In the same line of thought, he argues that "For Mays, a Baptist, the demands for civil rights were a theological necessity" (8). Comparatively, Jelks concludes that for Mays "Christianity and democratic practices were wedded together as though the one informed the other" (157).

Moreover, Jelks presents Benjamin Elijah Mays as an internationalist and a cosmopolitan. Mays was not only concerned about the improvement of black life in America, he was also committed to racial justice in South Africa by challenging the country's Apartheid policy and its racist institutions that dehumanized South

African blacks. He was troubled by the awful treatment of Jews in various parts of the world. He disapproved British imperialism in India and praised Gandhi for his resistance toward it. Mays was also troubled about the complexity of class struggle, ethnic division, and religious factionalism, which he thought were hindrances to Indian democratic freedom; for him, they "made the independence struggle so difficult" (128). Similarity, he voiced his criticisms against American imperialism in Asia, and correspondingly, challenged Western cultural hegemony in various parts of the world.

The interested reader should be aware that Jelks's *Benjamin Elijah Mays, Schoolmaster of the Movement: A Biography* is the recipient of these prestigious awards: the 2013 BCALA Literary Award, Black Caucus of the American Library Association, and 2013 Lillian Smith Book Award. This project complements John Herbert Roper's important work*, The Magnificent Mays: A Biography of Benjamin Elijah Mays (2012)*. Unquestionably, this brilliant work has expanded our understanding of the centrality of Benjamin Mays as the architect of the Civil Rights Movement and the compelling story of black activism and relentless force of Prophetic Christianity to foster a just democratic social order in America. Jelks's biography on Mays—a vital figure in America in the twentieth century—is a major contribution to American intellectual history.

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RACE, RIOTS, AND ROLLER COASTERS: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America. By Victoria W. Wolcott. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2012.

Studies of the "long civil rights movement" have increasingly focused on housing and education, but Victoria Wolcott urges historians not to dismiss the struggle to desegregate sites of leisure and recreation. Central to her argument are two specific, well-supported points: the first is that desegregation of public accommodations in the postwar decades was a national (not simply a southern) struggle; and the second is that desegregation efforts were initially met with violent white resistance to prevent segregation, and then by white abandonment once African Americans gained access to previously white-only spaces. Wolcott thus firmly locates the desegregation of public recreation within larger narratives of the black freedom struggle, white resistance, and urban disinvestment. "Segregated public accommodations," she writes, "were not an ephemeral barrier to civil rights, easily defeated by the nonviolent movement. Instead, they were the most visible manifestation of a broader racialization of public space in America" (203).

*Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters* begins with discussion of segregation in public accommodations in the years before World War II and then explores the wartime and postwar efforts of civil rights organizations and individual African Americans to challenge that segregation via lawsuits, boycotts, demonstrations, and civil disobedience, particularly in the north where longstanding civil rights laws were generally unenforced. With a deluge of evidence, Wolcott illustrates that white violence

was consistently the response to both organized and quotidian efforts to desegregate public space. Civil disobedience continued to play a major role in desegregating public accommodations during the 1950s, accelerating after the *Brown* decision in 1954, but fear of the violence provoked by white resistance slowed municipal and judicial efforts to enforce desegregation "giving many communities time to subvert the law through privatization and closings" (10). The 1960s student movement linked desegregation to broader political goals, and engaged in radical nonviolent activism, particularly to desegregate the most controversial spaces: pools and beaches. As she explains, "jumping into white pools and wading into the ocean on segregated beaches were popular pastimes for young, mobilized African Americans by the summer of 1963" (166).

As desegregation advanced after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, municipalities responded by closing down public recreation spaces, such as pools, or transforming them into private clubs, leaving many urban neighborhoods bereft of adequate recreation facilities. Amusement park owners stopped investing in upkeep or sold off the parks to private developers. "The result was the demise of nearly all of the traditional trolley parks and the continued rise of the theme park" (219). Citing the incredible nostalgia for a previous era of (segregated) urban amusement parks, Wolcott refutes both the idea that black disorder ruined these parks as well as the idea that their decline was simply a result of "a general privatization of American leisure, a turning inward to television sets and backyard playgrounds and pools," noting that attendance at suburban theme parks boomed in the 1960s and after (219). Rather whites responded to desegregation with disinvestment and abandonment of these leisure sites, hastening their decline.

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RETIREMENT ON THE LINE: Age, Work, and Value in an American Factory. By Caitrin Lynch. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2012.

American labor, industrial and otherwise, is often thought of according to certain demographic paradigms. Caitrin Lynch's *Retirement on the Line*, though, forces us to rethink those norms and, in the process, the nature of work, aging, and employee-employer relationships.

It is a fascinating work of contemporary demographic study into modern gerontology. Beginning in 2006, Lynch began visiting the Vita Needle Company in Needham, Massachusetts (and later working at the factory starting in 2008). She conducted interviews and ethnographic research, framing her conclusions well within a myriad of sociological and anthropological frameworks.

At first glance, the company is rather typical of a small, family-run business. Since 1932 Vita has manufactured needles, typically hollow needles used for everything from basketballs to surgical procedures. It is hard, tedious, and meaningful work for its approximately forty line workers. What makes Vita Needle so intriguing, however, is its employees. While not exclusively, most of its workers are re-

tirement age (or well beyond). There are workers in their 70s, 80s, and even the 99-year-old Rosa.

Broken into two parts, the text hopes, according to Lynch, to "contribute to scholarship that exposes or probes cultural assumptions about the meaning of the life course; how to make late life meaningful; and how to find, create, and maintain value in life" (21). Part I, "Up the Stairs," centers on the value and reward Vita workers seem to glean from their days on the shop floor. "Making Money for Fred" (Fred, being the 56-year-old benevolent owner) is seen as worthwhile and non-exploitive. Exemplified by the Christmas party and bonus checks, familial relationships have developed, with Fred as a father figure and Rosa as a maternal one. Vita workers, Lynch discovered, feel a sense of belonging and sameness at work. They also enjoy the flexibility of work at Vita and, rather than a presumed exploitation, its employees see work there—with control over their schedule—as a "value making opportunity," where they can earn some extra money and "keep busy" (103). Part II, "In the Press," explores the remarkable media attention, in print and in film (such as the *New York Times*, *60 Minutes*, and several European-produced documentaries), paid to Vita Needle for its unique employment model. Outsiders have seen Vita as part curiosity, but also as a potential archetype for business and policy-making aimed at "humane capitalism" (149).

In short, Vita is and has been, according to Lynch, "a sanctuary, an oasis…a place that is comforting and caring, where they can belong" (115). This pleasant picture is an exceptionally convincing one. Some readers might be left wondering if all that occurs at Vita might be *too* harmonious—particularly in terms of conflict in the context of familial relationships (which Lynch admits occurs). Nevertheless, there is indeed something special about Vita Needle, and *Retirement on the Line* brilliantly captures that spirit—along the way getting us thinking about what it means to be "old," job satisfaction, and the value of honest work.

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ATLANTA UNBOUND: Enabling Sprawl through Policy and Planning. By Carlton Wade Basmajian. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. 2013.

Born at the confluence of two railroads in the 1830s, today the city of Atlanta is home to less than 500,000 residents (US Census Bureau, 2012). However, metro Atlanta (Atlanta-Sandy Springs Roswell Metropolitan Standard Area), the focus on Carlton Wade Basmajian's book, has almost 5.5 million people. Containing over half the population of Georgia (an otherwise rural state), metro Atlanta covers an area the size of Massachusetts, and is frequently cited as a remarkable example of sprawl in the United States. It certainly offers a powerful case study to explore twentieth century low-density urban expansion in the United States.

A quick review of Atlantan urban histories over the last twenty-five years indicates that Atlanta has been interpreted through three primary lenses: race (as in R. Bayor's *Race and the Shaping of 20th Century Atlanta* [1996]); political economy (as in D. Whitelegg's "A Battle on Two Fronts: Competitive Urges 'Inside' Atlanta"

[2002]); and regime theory (as in C. Stone's *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* [1989]). Claiming that previous scholars of Atlanta's urban history, like scholars of US urban expansion more generally, have ignored the active role of regional planning, Basmajian explores how regional planners engaged with Atlanta and post–World War II expansion.

Swimming in the archival seas in and around Atlanta, Basmajian has masterfully charted the course of the Atlanta Regional Commission (est. 1971): the 1976 Regional Development plan of metro Atlanta; 1980s "growth management" efforts; and the 1990s battle over the regional transportation network. The penultimate transportation chapter comes across as the most animated of the book. Sprawl-oriented assumptions underlying computer modeling drove the relentless building of major highways into suburbia. Threaded with both thoughtful analysis and rambunctious newspaper accounts, this chapter also stands as a useful reflection on Roy Barnes governorship of the state.

Basmajian offers the concept of planning as an "imprint of 'regional thinking,'" examining three scales of infrastructure policy (local, state, and federal) that, "together managed the urban development process" (2). Basmajian offers a way of understanding regional planning as a discourse of planning growth in northern Georgia (2). However, a more fully fleshed out theoretical articulation of regional thinking and institutional discourse would have been welcome. Several theorists who might have offered useful spatial and legal perspectives to theorize the various planning discourses materializing urban and suburban Atlanta spaces include: Duncan and Duncan's always thoughtful reflections on power and landscape (as in *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb* [2004]); Richard Schein's work on the work various formal and informal organizations shape urban spaces (as "A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene" [1997]); and Lewyn's reflections on legal spaces (as in "Zoning and Land Use Planning: Plans are Not Enough" [2013]).

More broadly, Basmajian follows in the footsteps of Americanists engaged in understanding the cultural production of urban and suburban spaces. This book offers American Studies practitioners a useful example of what the cultural geographer Richard Schein calls materialized discourse and discourse materialized. *Atlanta Unbound* provides a powerful resource for considering an evolving relationship between ideology and material landscapes. It also leaves this reader to wonder about the next step of both recognizing the unique elements of individual metropolitan regions, while also drawing larger conclusions about sprawl in twentieth century American cities.

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EMPIRE OF VINES: Wine Culture in America. By Erica Hannickel. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press. 2013.

Popular food histories especially those of Mark Kurlansky like *Cod (1998)* and *Salt (2003)* have reached a wide-audience of readers by focusing on a single item

to unleash a rich narrative regarding the environment and the political economy of food. However, more recently, as food studies has proliferated as an academic field, so too has the quantity of scholarly publications. Like Kurlansky, Erika Hannickel has contributed a work that traces the history and cultural significance of a single food. However, her work is more in line with academic food histories like David Smith's *Eating History* (2009) that trace the intersection of foodways and national identity.

Hannickel provides a cultural history of wine that covers American history from the nineteenth century to the present. She emphasizes both the cultivation of the grape as wine and as myth, claiming that the "still-prolific vineyard mythos" continues to be "tangled with the ideology of national expansion and its ideological foundation in manifest destiny" (4–5). Hannickel claims that wine was never perceived as one of life's essentials to most Americans as it is to the French and Italians. Instead, she claims wine has been bound to a sense of luxury. Americans' attraction to wine has a strong relationship to a romance of the vineyard as site of a gentle cultivation of the American wilderness. In the early nineteenth century, important horticulturalists like William Robert Prince were instrumental in promoting this mythos. Prince's nursery in Flushing, New York sold seeds, plants, and vines at first to the Hudson River Valley and later across the country. He advocated for the cultivation of native grapes that would be given American—rather than European—names. Hannickel describes how wine cultivation that began in New York moved west with the country. In her most detailed chapter, she presents the life of the upwardly-mobile Nicholas Longworth, who became a wealthy wine producer and real estate developer in nineteenth-century Cincinnati by cleverly cultivating both the land and the myth. His strategy would be repeated in the twentieth century in Sonoma and Napa Valley by new generations of entrepreneurs.

*Empire of the Vines* might be a disappointment to wine connoisseurs hoping for detailed account of the development of American wine. While Hannickel occasionally describes many varieties of American wines, her interest is in viticulture and demystification, rather than the finished product. Her final chapter warns about the continuing excesses of the vineyard mythos with a reading of contemporary popular representations of wine and its enthusiasts, including an extended analysis of the film *Sideways* (2004). Erica Hannickel's survey of manifest destiny, national identity, and the grape should be of interest to American Studies and Food Studies scholars alike. She convincingly argues that Americans came to realize that their Garden of Eden would not be complete without the ancient vine. By the twentieth century, American wines were produced from coast to coast and, as in the present, in nearly every region of the country.

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GRAVITY'S RAINBOW, DOMINATION, AND FREEDOM. By Luc Herman and Steven Weisenburger. Athens: University of Georgia Press. 2013.

In the forty years since the publication of *Gravity's Rainbow*, entire careers have been built around deciphering and interpreting Thomas Pynchon's notoriously dense and absurd novel that famously (and despite the unanimous recommendation of the jury) did not win the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The novel's many obscure historical, geographical, pop-cultural, and techno-scientific allusions and appropriations have been exhaustively mapped. The many vividly-rendered scenes of orgiastic non-heteronormative sexuality and wanton drug abuse that, for many readers, define the novel have been celebrated as brilliant deployments of a neo-Rabelaisian critique of western culture and alternately denounced as gratuitous and culturally-regressive reiterations of white male fantasies of brutality and psycho-sexual trauma. But until now no one had provided a compelling cultural-historical contextualization worthy of this now-canonical American novel.

With the publication of *Gravity's Rainbow, Domination, and Freedom*, Luc Herman and Steven Weisenburger have co-written a book that does just that by teasing out the many ways the novel drew upon and participated in the intellectual currents, countercultural politics, and newly-won freedoms of the era during which it was written. Their book makes a compelling case that the "epoch's radical contributions to social theory and freedom of expression, its debates over a U.S. military-industrial complex and over government secrecy and colonialist wars carried on in the name of anti-Communism and liberation, its arguments over government manipulation of information (the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, the 1971 Pentagon Papers incident), over civil rights in general and desegregation in particular" are all "vital contexts" for perceiving *Gravity's Rainbow* as a "satirical novel fired back at the West's abiding, deathly legacy: perpetual war, and its creation of masses who if not actually dead are nonetheless socially dead . . . subtly dominated by forms of soft power" (4–5).

In Part One, "Novel and Decade," the authors examine the works of Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, and Hannah Arendt, "neo-Freudians who shaped Long Sixties thinking about . . . fascism, patriarchy, and modes of soft power" (22). The next two chapters situate the novel in the history of the underground press which "if ink were blood, really were the organs that circulated the images and ideas that kept alive the movement's dreams of consciousness raising and freedom" (23). Part Two, "Domination," explores the many ways that *Gravity's Rainbow* simultaneously describes and dismantles the symbolic dominations commonly deployed during the Cold War era. Part Three, "Freedom," is an examination of the novel in light of its persistent engagement with the formal reproduction of the many esoteric spiritual "practices of divination" that were wildly popular in counterculture circles (157).

In short, this fascinating transnational and rigorously interdisciplinary collaboration by two preeminent Pynchon scholars offers readers a provocative look at a "much darker and more cynical (but not despairing) *Gravity's Rainbow* than most

Pynchon readers, and we ourselves, have been willing to see" (18). Scholars from across the humanities would do well to consider the larger implications of the cultural analysis which leads them to their nuanced conclusion.

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LISTENING IN DETAIL: Performances of Cuban Music. By Alexandra T. Vazquez. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2013.

Alexandra Vazquez delivers a provocative book on Cuban music performance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; fresh, because she proposes a nuanced interpretative approach to Cuban music via its often overlooked fine performative details, and provocative because Vazquez's treatment of the details she hears, sees, and feels destabilizes the discourses commonly rehearsed in talking about Cuban music. Vazquez chooses as her cases studies canonic (Olga Guillot, Dámaso Pérez Prado, Los Van Van) and not so canonic (Alfredo Rodríguez, Graciela Pérez) Cuban musicians, in addition to filmmakers (Rogelio París, Sara Gómez), whose careers span decades and across national borders and ethnic, racialized, and gendered boundaries. Her analytical work is sometimes personally revealing, and other times it challenges what we thought we have always heard. There are no musical examples or harmonic and rhythmic analyses, but rather thick descriptions (the author actually does not use Geertz) of one's own listening experiences. In the course of reflecting on the social, political, and historical significances of the details, Vazquez builds strong cases for needed interventions in the disciplines of Jazz Studies, Cuban American Studies, Latin@ Studies, and Cold War Studies by virtue of their ongoing refusal to listen across boundaries of genre, nationality, political history, and so on. Perhaps the author's most compelling intervention is through her proposal to listen with other cold war kids (cf. Gustavo Pérez Firmat's one-and-a-half generation); that is, those whose parents, like Vazquez's, fled Cuba, Korea, and Vietnam and whose attention to certain details of their parents' nostalgia, pain, and anger reveal shared experiences across difference. Another exceptional intervention is her listening to Graciela's oral history interview (as conducted by René López and Raúl Fernández) as constituting just another one of her musical performances in which she exhibits her skills improvising in feminism, blackness, and bilingualism.

In short, Vazquez's listening to details has us think about Cuban music in new and previously unexplored ways, well beyond genres, genre firsts, and genre originators. As Vazquez opens up Cuban music performance to new analytical and interpretive insight, history in its most conventional application takes it unavoidable places in the author's narrative. It is here, on occasion, where Vazquez's listening in detail is not always well-served. Discussions of Katherine Dunham and Rita Montaner seem to be pertinent to the overarching themes of the book, but in the end are cut short before any historical spade work is delivered; alas, the reader is instead asked to "imagine" what might have occurred (72–73). Or, the chapter on Pérez Prado, which is ironically overburdened with derivative historical background. The text, overall, is engaging, especially theoretically, but editorial attention to typos is

at times lacking. In the end, Vazquez's work is required reading not only for Cuban music scholars, but in particular those working in fields traversing African American and American studies. Students and scholars of many disciplines whose topical and methodological interests take them to Cuban music performance or music in general will draw much inspiration from *Listening in Detail*.

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MERLE HAGGARD: The Running Kind. By David Cantwell. Austin: University of Texas Press. 2013.

This book is rewarding although atypical for a university press. It has no scholarly apparatus besides a selected discography, and for sources it relies on Haggard's autobiographies, magazine profiles, and Cantwell's lifetime of listening. Although Cantwell has substantial insider knowledge including interviews with Haggard, this is not footnoted. He disavows any intent to produce a biography—although the outline of a *de facto* version is implicit—and opts instead for "strong-minded criticism" that moves through Haggard's records reflecting on how they relate to Haggard's career, the music industry, and changes in U.S. culture (7). Cantwell occasionally evokes scholars (e.g. Rick Perlstein's *Nixonland*, Craig Werner's *A Change is Gonna Come*, and works of Bill Malone)—thus hinting that his reflections emerge from a solid bibliography—but explicit evocations are few and far between.

Within these limits the book has many virtues. Cantwell shows how Haggard's family (his parents were "Okie" migrants and his father died when he was nine) and life story (he dropped out of high school and served time in San Quentin prison) shape his sensibilities and meanings as a cultural icon. Cantwell provides a window into the Bakersfield music scene and thoughtful interpretation of Haggard's influences. These include not only usual suspects like Lefty Frizzell, Jimmy Rodgers, and people from the Bakersfield scene (including band member Roy Nichols and spouse Bonnie Owens who was earlier married to Buck Owens), but also crooners like Bing Crosby.

In 1969 Haggard's career—already rising through hits like "Mama Tried"—exploded as "Okie from Muskogee" became a cultural phenomenon and earned him an invitation to Nixon's White House. "Okie" has ample irony to give it indeterminate meanings; Haggard supposedly wrote it while stoned, and the Grateful Dead performed it at Woodstock. However, his follow-up, "Fightin' Side of Me," was far more strident, and Haggard's populist sensibilities and defense of working folks' dignity—a constant from his early career to later years when he sang a Woody Guthrie anthem in a Michael Moore film—were drawn into the orbit of right-wing populism.

Haggard nearly released "Irma Jackson"—featuring a white protagonist's devotion to an African-American lover—as his follow-up to "Okie." However, under industry pressure he downplayed it, mirroring in real life his lyrics' fatalism about overcoming racist barriers. Cantwell believes that at this crossroads Haggard could have become a crossover (not solely country) star in the territory shared by coun-

try, folk, and rock, alongside people like Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan. He notes how Cash became an icon for alt-country when it rejected the pop sounds and suburban ethos of "Hot New Country." Haggard, too, flirted with alt-country, but with less success—not least due to pumping out inferior retreads on "Fightin' Side," such as one in which only Haggard and "crippled soldiers" still "give a damn" about the US flag. Despite alt-country's rebellious self-image, its audience was upscale compared to Haggard's; Cantwell suggests that Haggard's personal scars better matched the downscale.

Cantwell clearly valorizes Haggard. True, he notes blemishes such as Haggard's succession of wives (including Bonnie Owens and Leona Williams, both of whom reaped mixed career benefits and suffered from his infidelities) and he flags political alliances and ideas that will seem less than exemplary to many readers of this review. He lingers on records likely to interest only fans, and often enthuses about musical passages that seem workmanlike at best. In his judgment, the 1971 *Hag* album merits comparison with Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On* and Haggard's song "Big City" articulates working class protest "no less [than] Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's 'The Message' or Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*" (222). Again, "Haggard's writing [around 1970] was as smart in its way as Dylan's . . . or Lennon and McCartney's, his singing as powerful as Aretha Franklin's"—with James Brown as his "only peer…[in] producing such a high quantity of quality work" (126).

We can give such judgments the maximum benefit of doubt in light of Cantwell's contention that Haggard was a paradigmatic voice for the white male working class during a culture war. Framed this way, it makes sense to stage dialogues with *What's Goin' On* or Brown's "Say It Loud (I'm Black and Proud)" given the undoubted stellar quality and influence of Haggard's best work. Cantwell's thoughtful reflections in this vein, coupled with his quasi-biography of a towering figure in country music history, make his contribution very much worth reading.

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MODEL IMMIGRANTS AND UNDESIRABLE ALIENS: The Cost of Immigration Reform in the 1990s. By Christina Gerken. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2013.

In the mid-1990s, the 104th Congress debated and passed three laws that would have a profound impact on U.S. immigration policy: the Illegal Immigration Reform & Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA). The deliberation of these three pieces of legislation involved wide-ranging congressional and media debates about U.S. immigration policy and how it ought to be reformed. In *Model Immigrants and Undesirable Aliens* Christina Gerken argues that these debates constitute "a complex discursive field" (69), which can be analyzed with a Foucauldian approach "to examine how exactly the 1990s immigration reform

discourse produced a consensus that stricter immigration laws . . . were necessary, rational, and economically profitable" (7).

Ultimately, Gerken argues, the 1990s immigration reform discourse focused on two main discursive threads: 1.) a neoliberal logic that made economic concerns primary in determining U.S. immigration policy and 2.) a sharp contrast between "legal" and "illegal" immigrants, involving tightening restrictions for the former and broad dehumanization and criminalization of the latter.

First, these three immigration-related reforms reflected a neoliberal effort to shift economic responsibility for social welfare from the state to individuals and families. For example, PRWORA restricted immigrant access to benefits and made immigrant sponsors legally responsible for immigrant support. The 1990s immigration reform discourse emphasized that the privilege of immigration should be reserved for individuals and families who not only demonstrated the correct morality (heteronormative family values and respect for immigration law), but who also demonstrated rational pursue of economic opportunity (strong work ethic, pursuit of education, and maintenance of small, cohesive families). Gerken concludes that immigration reform "attempted to reorganize the U.S. immigration system as a market-like structure. Under this neoliberal project, potential immigrants were regarded as customers who wished to obtain a desirable commodity—an immigrant visa. In order to obtain this commodity, individuals had to follow certain rules, accept personal responsibility, and provide proof that they were unlikely to become a financial burden or a security threat" (38).

Second, Gerken explores the growing discursive divide between the representations of "legal" versus "illegal" immigrants during the mid-1990s. She is interested in "how politicians and the mainstream media juxtaposed an idealized image of responsible, self-sufficient legal immigrants who eagerly adhered to heteronormative family values with altogether negative depictions of undocumented workers who were commonly perceived as an unassimilable underclass" (7–8). One of the main strengths of the book, however, is Gerken's attention to the fact that positive representations did not protect legal immigrants from tightening restrictions nor from increased penalties for those who stepped out of line. Specifically, she examines AEDPA's new definition of "aggravated felonies," crimes for which legal immigrants could be deported after serving their sentence. Gerken notes that this category of crime was meaningless outside of immigration law and included nonviolent and non-felony offenses such as shoplifting. Like much of 1990s immigration reform, these increased penalties concretized the idea that "immigration was not a right but a privilege" (103).

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PROOF OF GUILT: Barbara Graham and the Politics of Executing Women in America. By Kathleen A. Cairns. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2013.

As of January 2014, there were 3,070 people on death row, sixty-three of whom are women, and gendered analyses of capital punishment ask us to consider

how gender scripts play a role in who is sentenced to death. In this regard, Kathleen Cairn's argument in *Proof of Guilt* is quite compelling. For Cairns, Barbara Graham is more than just an executed woman; she is a cultural icon. Therefore, her execution is a key event in the political and cultural history of capital punishment. In 1955, California executed 31-year-old Graham for her participation in the 1953 robbery and murder of Mabel Moynihan. Her trial and eventual execution in the gas chamber captivated the American public, and her death continued to galvanize death penalty opponents through the film *I Want to Live!* (1958). In *Proof of Guilt*, Kathleen Cairns asks why Graham was so captivating, and concludes that Graham's physical beauty and sexual persona made her a complicated figure.

Cairns locates Graham's story within a matrix of cultural events like film noir, Communism, shifting gender roles, and the changing role of the press in the law. In newspaper accounts, Graham is depicted alternatively as a femme fatale, a sexually indiscriminate user of men, and a victim of horrific abuse by an uncaring mother and unscrupulous men. By ending Graham's story halfway through the book, Cairns's form enacts her argument that Graham "lives" on after her death. Public opinion about Graham is shaped by gendered newspaper accounts and journalistic photography. Right up until her death in the gas chamber when her "soft brown hair" and "rouged crimson lips" are described by the San Francisco Examiner, Graham is described as a beauty. Cairns contends that the trial was as much about whether or not Graham was a sympathetic defendant as it was about the facts of the case. To convince readers further, the book includes a variety of photographs of Graham. Even after her death, beauty and sympathy continued to be debated about Graham. For example, the film based on her case *I Want to Live!*, unlike other movies of the time that featured guilty women, was about an innocent woman who is railroaded by the prison system. While Cairns makes a compelling argument, at times the book risks replicating the objectification of Graham that it seeks to critique. For example, Cairns describes Graham's form-fitting clothes and curvaceous body in the section describing her trial preparation.

The execution of women in America continues to be an important topic for scholars of law and feminism. *Proof of Guilt* uses the story of one woman to evaluate the power of beauty in death row narratives and makes an important contribution to capital punishment history. In later years, women like Karla Fay Tucker and Wanda Jean Allen would challenge the country's notions of gender and justice, and Cairns elucidates how these ideas came about. Clearly, capital punishment continues to be a debated political act.

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PROPHETS OF THE POSTHUMAN: American Fiction, Biotechnology and the Ethics of Personhood. By Christina Bieber Lake. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013.

In *Prophets of the Posthuman: American Fiction, Biotechnology and the Ethics of Personhood,* Christina Bieber Lake probes into the meaning of humanity

imperiled by technoscience which in pursuit of an at-any-price transcendence of limitations sweeps aside ethics from inquiry. Likewise, deploring the exclusion of "the ancient question of the good life" from the academy, the author advocates the return of narrative to ethical questions and the active involvement of Humanities in bioethics (xv). To fill an existing gap in literary study that focuses only on interpretation, Bieber Lake's study revalues the work of Flannery O'Connor, Nathaniel Hawthorne, George Saunders, James Tiptree, Jr., Toni Morrison, Margaret Atwood, Walker Percy, Raymond Carver and Marilynne Robinson in light of large ethical questions.

Though there is no unanimity about the term posthuman, the reader has to wait until page thirteen to find an explicit definition of the word given by N. Katherine Hayles who, in her book *How We Became Posthuman*, presents the concept as a new category resulting from the osmosis of the American self with the biotechnological revolution. In the same way, the author cogently elaborates on this concept, contrasting it with the related term of transhumanism only in her last chapter. However, except for this frustrating delay concerning fundamental terminology, the study is highly readable and accessible to the general reader, although it draws widely on philosophy and theology. Bieber Lake does not hide her affinities with Christian theology in particular; her long introduction ends with a revisiting of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Yet what underpins this study is not only Bieber Lake's faith in Christian love but also in narrative and in the capacity of literature to maintain a humane humanity in a dehumanizing posthuman world. Indeed, in her conclusion, the author defines fiction as "the art of love for persons" and opts for her literary prophets, the nine writers she analyses, rather than Ray Kurzweil who exemplifies the transhuman mind (189).

Indeed, Bieber Lake adopts Walter Brueggemann's notion of "prophetic imagination" to distinguish the writers she chose, who, through their capacity for truth-telling and foretelling, and their ability to criticize and energize, manage to "oppose the dominant consciousness of an advanced technological society" offering an alternative (12). Bieber Lake's key operating concept is personhood, which involves commitment instead of individualism, and that involves freedom. Through her readings the author fleshes out a position termed "personalism," "the belief that ethics must start with the basic assumption that human beings are, simply by virtue of being born, persons within the human community and thus our neighbors," which is quite eloquent of the book's Christian leanings affirming *telos* over *techne* and progress over process (9).

Tightly structured the study offers close readings of novels and short stories that illuminate hitherto ignored dynamics of these narratives. Bieber Lake demonstrates their potential to challenge the dominant culture of consumerism, scientific positivism, and the bioenhancement technologies. A rich bibliography ranging from Saint Thomas Aquinas to Ray Kurzweil accompanies the book.

Aristi Trendel Université du Maine, France

ROLL WITH IT: Brass Bands in the Streets of New Orleans. By Matt Sakakeeny, with artwork by Willie Birch. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2013.

The aftermath of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 has generated many stories of resilience, hope, and survival pertaining to the experiences of New Orleans musicians, including Jason Berry's epilogue to the revised edition of *Up from the Cradle of Jazz* (2009), Keith Spera's *Groove Interrupted* (2011), John Swenson's *New Atlantis* (2011), and Eric Porter's and Lewis Watts's *New Orleans Suite* (2013)—all valuable studies. Matt Sakakeeny's *Roll with It* adds significantly to this narrative trend and provides perhaps the most in-depth and focused account yet. The book presents cogent case studies not only of the vicissitudes confronting members of the brass bands in question (Hot 8, Rebirth, Soul Rebels, etc.), but also of the challenges facing a team of local scholars who combine advocacy for the brass band "second line" tradition with dedication to its documentation, and of the embedded infrastructure problems related to racism, poverty, violence, and invisible service economies deriving from neo-liberal political and economic agendas that affect them all. Sakakeeny's rendition of the voyage of personal discovery that accompanied his fieldwork is especially noteworthy and engaging, generated partly by the inevitable catharsis that Katrina entailed for anyone who cares about New Orleans, but even more profoundly grounded in the lessons learned from interaction with his informants as they struggled to regain their individual and collective identities through the act of making music.

As an ethnomusicologist, Sakakeeny is particularly interested in assessing brass band activity as a multi-faceted form of labor that bridges the gap between service to the indigenous black community and capitulation to the imperatives of cultural tourism and institutionalized festival traditions (such as "Jazz Fest"), but he is careful to let the musicians speak for themselves as they negotiate for power against the various constraints that threaten to overwhelm them. Sakakeeny's study is replete with insightful analysis of the strategies used by brass band musicians to regulate parades by manipulating tempo, volume, and repertoire to gratify "second liners" and to guide them safely through the streets. There is also a wealth of useful historical information, including new perspectives on the role of brass bands in jazz's origins, issues related to cultural dynamics and the reconfiguration of tradition with the rise of Harold Dejan's Olympia Brass Band in the 1960s, the rejuvenation that occurred with Danny Barker's Fairview Baptist Church Christian Band experiments in the 1970s, and the new wave of experimentation and fusion with modern jazz and popular music styles (such as hip hop) driven by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band and others that has dominated the scene for the past 30 years. Willie Birch's magnificent artwork and afterward evoke the visual richness and spirituality that enriches "second lines" and provide further enticement for readers to experience for themselves both the solemnity and unbridled joy that animate "second line" parades in New Orleans.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn Tulane University

SEX, OR THE UNBEARABLE. By Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2013.

Berlant and Edelman take debates around the antisocial thesis as a point of departure to theorize the importance of relationality, loss and repair, sovereignty, and negativity in the politics and ethics of queer theory. Despite the overlapping topics of interest that have marked their respective works, their varying theoretical approaches make for a smart, enlivening, and productive conversation in *Sex, or the Unbearable*. The book is broken into a co-written preface, three chapters, and a couple of afterwords. The first chapter, "Sex without Optimism," focuses on how relationality is imagined as optimistic only through the loss of negativity. As Berlant explains, "We came to the question of sex without optimism focusing on the ways that sex undoes the subject" (4). For Edelman, this is very much related to his project in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. In both places, he questions the "orientation toward a future," an optimism which leaves a "gloss we might think of as a finish, in more than one sense of that term" (3). From this position, Berlant creates a space for herself when she quips, "I am a utopian, Lee is not" (5). She continues, "I do not see optimism primarily as a glossing over, as a 'fantasy' in the negative sense of resistance to the Real. I am interested in optimism as a mode of attachment to life. I am committed to the political project of imagining how to detach from lives that don't work" (5). As such, the two authors outline their varying stakes for thinking through the issues of the book.

"What Survives," the next chapter, was originally written shortly after Eve Sedgwick's death, and fittingly ruminates on failure, loss, and reparation in the engagement of Sedgwick's scholarship. In this chapter, the two authors consider the notion of repair as both pernicious (Edelman) and as transferential (Berlant). Edelman takes up Sedgwick's work in "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," arguing that her take on reparativity is deeply connected, rather than opposed, to paranoia. According to Edelman, Sedgwick leads "reparativity and its project of survival back into the paranoid…making difference out of sameness by naming as two what amounts to one" (43). At the same time, he suggests that Sedgwick both requires a distinction between "good" and "bad" and proposes thought beyond "good" and "bad." Berlant argues that a reading of Sedgwick needs to account for how repair does not necessarily imply the "trumping" of one model over another; rather, "the transferential situation lets us encounter where we don't make sense without being defeated by it" (54), meaning that the work of repair is not always an impulse "toward mastery" of the self.

The compelling final chapter, "Living with Negativity," considers the sovereign subject, incoherence, and what the ethical engagement of theorists might be. The chapter begins with the most tense, argumentative moment of the book. Edelman outlines the role of sex in contemporary political debates, where discussions of sex may seem anachronistic and too personal in fields interested in the distribution of rights or the management of populations. In querying the current stakes of queer theory, he glosses over the differences in his and Berlant's thinking. He character-

izes Berlant's utopianism regarding the transformation of systems of domination as reliant upon a "dedramaticization" of negativity (64). In contradistinction, his work pursues those negative encounters as drama and therefore "ruptures in logic" itself (65). Berlant retorts that she has not been arguing for a reparativity to take the place of the nonsovereign subject, nor has she been arguing against drama. Rather, she asserts, it is important to understand how the uneasiness created by negative encounters is negotiated, not just that the encounters happen (67). At the core of this debate are the stakes of queer theory: what its uses are, if it is outdated, what it can do if we are not future-oriented as theorists. These very questions bring about contradictions and disagreements, but Berlant ends on a pointedly optimistic note that signals the importance of her work with Edelman. She suggests that "collaborative action . . . can shift lived worlds" (125).

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SOCCER CULTURE IN AMERICA: Essays on the World's Sport in Red, White and Blue. Edited by Yuya Kiuchi. Jefferson, NC: McFarland. 2013.

Through a collection of essays written mostly by professors at American universities, Yuya Kiuchi seeks to find the meaning of soccer in American culture. Kiuchi, a faculty member at Michigan State University, argues that contrary to popular belief, soccer has long been an American sport, and a popular one at that.

The first section of Kiuchi's text, which provides the strongest contributions to the field, addresses the unique history of soccer in the United States through well-crafted essays. First, David Keyes explains the origins of the sport in the U.S., emphasizing how this "foreign" game became "American" and "safe" for consumption by American children and their parents through the efforts of the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). Then, Andrew M. Guest explicates the uniquely American relationship between the U.S. soccer system and the U.S. educational system, a connection that is often difficult for the rest of the world to understand. Finally, Dennis J. Seese provides a substantial literature review of soccer-related academic studies to demonstrate how the increase of soccer's popularity reflects a change in "traditional America."

The second part of the book provides an intriguing analysis on the economic aspects of soccer in the U.S. Cliff Starkey's ironic essay stands out. He argues that despite America's capitalist economic model and anti-socialist sentiments, U.S. sporting leagues have adopted socialist economic models (e.g. profit sharing, teams subject to league decisions, a "draft system" designed to increase competitiveness, salary caps, player distribution systems, and no risk of being "relegated" to a lower level of competition). On the other hand, Western European countries that tend to have left-leaning socialist systems have long implemented cut-throat capitalist models for many of its soccer leagues (including relegation, non-existent salary caps, bidding wars for player contracts, and teams being corporations).

Part III of Kiuchi's edited volume provides empirical support for the argument that soccer already is a significant part of the American sporting landscape. The

central thesis of Glen M.E. Duerr's article "Becoming Apple Pie" is that the growth of Major League Soccer (MLS, the U.S. top-tier pro soccer league), a large immigrant population, and very high youth participation in soccer have made it the fifth or perhaps even fourth most popular sport in the U.S. An essay by Danielle Sarver Coombs uses the well-documented success of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team to explore issues of gender and sexuality.

The final section of the book is also the weakest. It contains interviews with a graduate student and former Japanese League referee, but does little to shed light on the importance of soccer in America or enhance the preceding chapters. A chapter directly addressing the consumption of soccer among U.S. Latino communities would have enhanced the book. Nevertheless, the quality of scholarship in the chapters of Kiuchi's text is solid, and the editor succeeds in demonstrating that soccer has long been a part of American society and is continually increasing in popularity. The book is accessible to non-academic audiences as well as specialists in the field.

Robert G. Rodriguez Texas A&M University–Commerce

SPACES OF CONFLICT, SOUNDS OF SOLIDARITY: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles. By Gaye Theresa Johnson. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2013.

In this magnificently written and researched book, Gaye Theresa Johnson offers readers a much-needed alternative to dominant narratives of conflict and division between Black and Brown communities in Southern California. Johnson advances the concept of "spatial entitlement," in order to render visible the often overlooked, everyday acts of resistance and survival through which African Americans and Mexican Americans have carved out meaningful spaces of congregation, creativity, and community in post–World War II Los Angeles. By spatial entitlement, Johnson refers to the ways in which "marginalized communities have created new collectives based not just upon eviction and exclusion from physical places, but also on new and imaginative uses of technology, creativity, and spaces" (x). With this concept in hand, the author offers a critical historiography covering roughly seventy years of Black-Brown relations in Los Angeles.

The five chapters that make up the book focus on spatial struggles and cultural expressions in postwar Los Angeles as a window into how marginalized communities construct meaningful spaces of belonging. Importantly, the author does not get lost in the minutia of individual struggles, however significant and captivating they may be. Instead, Johnson tacks back and forth between specific cases and larger patterns and histories to reveal a shared cultural politics between Black and Brown communities. For example, in the first chapter Johnson examines 1930s and 1940s interracial alliances through the histories of two activists—Luisa Moreno and Charlotte Bass. This chapter offers much to our understanding of mid-century working-class and anti-racist activism by focusing on two significant, yet understudied activists. Johnson develops a gender and race analysis that is sorely missing in the existing literature as she convincingly argues that the leadership and politics

enacted by Bass and Moreno laid the foundation for future Black and Brown coalitions—as well as the repression of interracial spaces in the 1940s and 1950s.

With this important history in mind, Johnson goes on to highlight how African American and Mexican American youth created "sonic spaces of mutual recognition" through the production and consumption of popular music. Johnson elaborates these connections through her discussion of interracial R&B groups in the 1950s and 1960s to more recent examples of Black and Brown punk and hip-hop. These discussions open up exciting questions for researchers interested in the connections between cultural production and social movements. For example: how, if at all, are the new collectives forged through shared sonic spaces mobilized politically? Similarly, how are the subjectivities of listeners impacted by these shared soundtracks? How does the notion of spatial entitlement complement that of cultural citizenship? How are the politics of the Black and Brown punks discussed in the book connected to a genealogy of third world internationalism?

Overall, Johnson's scholarship contributes much to our understanding of postwar American history. As a point of clarification, however, it would be useful for the reader if the author explained how she is using Brown, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana/Chicano and Latina/Latino since they are used seemingly interchangeably throughout the book. A brief discussion of how these labels are used would be helpful in orienting the reader, especially given their historical and political implications.

Ultimately, Johnson's work is refreshing in that she rejects the sensationalist accounts of Black-Brown violence that often dominates mainstream media accounts of urban race relations, while at the same time avoiding the trap of romanticizing the complicated, multilayered histories of these communities in a Los Angeles characterized by deindustrialization, defunding of social services and public education, and White flight. The result is that *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity* lays fertile ground for future scholarship by offering a rich and nuanced account of the shared struggles and victories of Black and Brown communities in Los Angeles.

Maurice Rafael Magaña University of California, Los Angeles

STRANGE NATURES: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination. By Nicole Seymour. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2013.

What does it mean to practice a queer ecocriticism? Such a query animates Nicole Seymour's *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination,* a work as invested in lingering with the paradigms of intersectionality that such a question foregrounds as it is in developing a definitive answer to it. While *Strange Natures* is not the first monograph in the field of queer ecology, it is—to this reader's mind, at least—a groundbreaking book, one that carefully traces the barriers to such work (namely, queer theory's vexed relationship to "nature" and the two fields' ostensibly conflicting relationships to the status of futurity) in order to develop a queer ecocritical practice that engages, rather than resists, such difficulty. Indeed, Seymour's work revels in the surprising and the paradoxical; from its

chosen archive to a reading practice that insists upon interrogating how conceptions of "nature" have been wielded to validate harm to vulnerable populations, human and non-human, *Strange Natures* is not necessarily what readers expect from traditional ecocriticism. And that, of course, is part of the point.

Also part of the point is the book's commitment to complexity, philosophical and ethical; Seymour is not content to demonstrate how the queer and the ecological meet, but also seeks to show how a queer ecological project intersects with other political projects, including anti-racism, anti-capitalism, and anti-classism. This is perhaps the chief accomplishment of *Strange Natures*: that it refuses to think queerness and environmentalism apart from questions of social justice, insisting that a queer ecological methodology, practiced well, cannot help but attune us to questions of race, class, disability, and colonialism.

After a powerful introduction outlining the difficulties of queer ecological work, *Strange Natures* unfolds over four chapters. The first, which puts Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* in conversation with contemporaneous works of Caribbean literature (Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* and Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*), argues for an "organic transgenderism," an understanding of gender transitionality that is as natural as it is cultural, that can dwell outside the medical establishment (or before medical intervention), and that contributes to an environmentalist and anti-capitalist imaginary. Conceptually, this chapter is echoed not by what immediately follows it but instead by Seymour's final chapter, which treats Shelley Jackson's novel *Half Life*—a sardonic depiction of conjoined twins living in the fallout of Nuclear testing—as the occasion to imagine an ethic of care that is performed irreverently, that embraces "ugly" landscapes and "grotesque" bodies (164), and that welcomes the dissolution of self-sovereignty. These two chapters are linked both by their insistence on the role of the non-normative body in queer ecological ethics (Seymour explicitly reminds us that "conjoinment is not unlike transgenderism" [149]), and by questions of genre (Cliff's and Mootoo's magical realism returns implicitly as a concern in Seymour's engagement with Jackson's speculative fiction). This latter point is in keeping with Seymour's important attention throughout the book to questions of genre, tone, and form. Her middle two chapters—one on Todd Haynes's *Safe* and the other on Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*—operate through a formal investigation of the filmmakers' cinematic vision. Thus Seymour argues that Haynes's famed long shots "make possible a consideration of the envirohealth risks to those bodies and the habits of seeing that otherwise obscure them" (73) and that surveillance in *Brokeback Mountain* indicates "that mainstream gay identity emerges not just alongside, but through the privatization of public and natural spaces" (109). Particularly within the context of existing work in queer ecocriticism, *Strange Natures* is exemplary for its demonstration of how texts' conceptual claims emerge from the particularities of literary form.

Worth reading as much for its methodological inventiveness as for its local arguments, *Strange Natures* is powerful not only in what it claims but also in what it asks—of texts, of us, of queer theory, and of the environmental movement. Is it possible to be earnestly playful—and playfully earnest—in response to environ-

mental degradation (viii)? How do we learn to care about what we do not know, cannot imagine, and perhaps will never see (11)? What would it look like to develop a queer model of futurity—or to understand futurity as itself already queer (27)? How might such a temporal model help us to resist models of capital accumulation or the privileging of the reproduction of nuclear families (58)? How might queer ecological readerly practices help us to develop "a way of seeing and knowing that is empathetically attuned to the experience of the oppressed" (74)? How might we rethink the when and where and who of "environmental crisis" itself (74)?

Seymour makes a point in each of her chapters to turn to what she deems the "real-world implications" (103) of her arguments, but one of the great strengths of her book is that never does it feel detached from that world; as we work our way through, practical implications emerge in and from the book's readings. In this, *Strange Natures* serves as a respectful rejoinder to queer theorists like Lee Edelman, whose tendency, in *No Future* and elsewhere, to (in Seymour's words) "locate queer irony in the refusal of all political positions" makes "not just queer politics, but queer *ecological* politics, impossible" (150). By contrast, Seymour's text limns the contours of the possible, demonstrating how a queer ecological politics intersects with, emerges from, and necessitates engagement with other pressing projects of our time.

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'TIL FAITH DO US PART: How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America. By Naomi Schaefer Riley. New York: Oxford University Press. 2013.

The makeup of American marriages is changing more dynamically than at any point in history. According to Naomi Schaefer Riley, 42 percent of American marriages are interfaith relationships, and this statistic shows no signs of slowing down. Schaefer Riley's study further indicates the changing attitudes toward religion in the public sphere, effects on divorce and marriage satisfaction rates, and the "pressures of pluralism" (13) and "obsessions with tolerance" (15) that ultimately make discussing interfaith marriage difficult. After all, as Schaefer Riley argues, interfaith marriage "is often a story of competing loyalties" (202). Blending personal experience, thorough interviews, and empirical data, Schaefer Riley tackles this issue with objectivity and grace, and challenges her readers to think differently about the privatization of faith in America.

Though the subtitle of *'Til Faith Do Us Part* is "How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America," an equally pertinent subtitle could be "How America is Transforming Interfaith Marriage" because Schaefer Riley identifies trends in how Americans perceive religion that have led to shifts in marriage tendencies. Namely, older Americans are more likely to marry someone of a different faith because their ties to their own faith dwindled in young adult years. Plus, in American discourse, anxieties about discussing religion affect our relationships; we do not want to be perceived as discriminatory because we are of another faith. These attitudes have consequences, as Schaefer Riley finds that divorce rates are generally higher in

interfaith couples, which is a sign of the "tensions between American individualism and the search for community" (7).

Other than being descriptive, Schaefer Riley also seeks to prescribe a balance to strengthen both religion and marriage. Considering the higher rates of divorce, unhappiness, and anxiety experienced by interfaith couples, Schaefer Riley recommends that American society open up civil discussions of religion so that couples can feel more comfortable "forging marriages around common beliefs," which is what sociologists identify as the most important element of a successful relationship (14).

Schaefer Riley also considers the attitudes and perspective of the clergy, who are often the first ones to negotiate and draw boundaries of an interfaith marriage. Interviews with Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, and Native American clergy reveal a similar tension between the impulse to accommodate a pluralist culture and preserve a religious heritage. While couples preparing for an interfaith marriage are concerned with "comfort," many clergy are concerned with the legacy of faith. Through these interviews, Schaefer Riley begins to understand how definitions of marriage are indeed malleable.

Ultimately, Schafer Riley challenges her reader to take religion more seriously in discussions about marriage—not to take religion as a mere "immutable personal trait," but to understand how it makes our values specific and can help us avoid the anxieties that arrive with competing loyalties (205). Crafted with humanized examples and defended by some intriguing data, Schaefer Riley makes a fascinating and nuanced argument that emphasizes the role of parents and grandparents in opening up this public dialogue. While many may disagree with Schaefer Riley's recommendations (that she is sometimes quick to make), this study is sure to spark further scholarship on the origins, effects, and promise of interfaith marriages in America.

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TOUGH ON HATE?: The Cultural Politics of Hate Crimes. By Clara S. Lewis. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 2013.

Although gay college student Matthew Shepard's murder was not legally deemed a hate crime, Shepard has become the paradigmatic hate crime victim, his image so often invoked that the federal legislation against hate crimes is named after him and lynching victim James Byrd, Jr. Though their murders raised national consciousness about bias-based violence, Clara S. Lewis argues in *Tough on Hate?: The Cultural Politics of Hate Crimes*, the media, politicians, and the general public have used their images in ways that paradoxically decry "hate" while undermining "our collective sense of culpability" (25) so that we cannot act on the ongoing structural oppression that incubates hate.

Lewis posits that our well-meaning narratives about hate crimes demand a post-difference citizenship, "whereby members of historically marginalized groups and their allies are given access to public support by condoning post-difference ideology" (91). Victims of hate crimes (or their family members) must deny their differ-

ence, which otherwise challenges ideas about national unity. Victims of anti–Arab/Muslim hate crimes must stress their love of America and Islam's non-threatening nature. Racial minorities must be "race blind," relegating race-based violence to the Civil Rights era (except in the exceptional case at hand). Victims of homophobic violence cannot be sexual but, like Shepard, childlike and from "spectacularly normal" backgrounds (96). Yet victims are selected precisely because they are not normative; their religious, ethnic, racial, and sexual identities place them outside of the norm. In a post-difference world, these identities don't matter—except that they do, sometimes to the point of death.

By erasing the very difference that inspired the crime, the public again victimizes with its "overwhelming desire to prove that we, the people within the community where the crime occurred, are better than the crime" (3). Hate crime narratives focus on the normality of the victim. (How tempting it is, as Matthew Shepard's mother Judy speaks, to think, "That could have been my son!" Except that it wouldn't ever be your son unless your son is gay). They also place the perpetrators outside of society, as "loners" on the "fringe." The public's desire to depict perpetrators, who are actually "disturbingly conformist" (85), as abnormal is motivated by the same need to view such crimes as abnormal rather than as "an expression of extended histories of often state-sponsored violence against minority groups and of broader contemporary social forces" (60). If victims really are different and perpetrators really are conformists, we could no longer see these crimes as unthinkable but as violent, predictable consequences of oppression.

Lewis skillfully analyzes the rhetoric around hate crimes, examining news coverage, political hearings, legislation, and documentary films, and deploying theories from diverse disciplines in a way that will engage American Studies scholars. Unfortunately, it draws from a limited number of high-profile crimes—for example, no anti-Semitic crimes are examined. That said, it is easy enough for readers to imagine how the rich critiques that Lewis articulates here could be applied to other hate crimes and, more importantly, to our responses to them.

Rebecca Barrett-Fox Arkansas State University

ABORTION IN THE AMERICAN IMAGINATION: Before Life and Choice, 1880–1940. By Karen Weingarten. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 2014.

A solid work of American Studies scholarship should be truly interdisciplinary at the same time it strives to challenge its audience to scrutinize a deeply ingrained ideology. Karen Weingarten's *Abortion in the American Imagination* does this with verve. By drawing a trajectory from Anthony Comstock's attempts to regulate morality in the late-nineteenth century, to popular fiction of the early-twentieth century, to abortion's ties with economics and labor philosophy, Weingarten demonstrates that the contemporary abortion discourse of "life" and "choice" reveals that, despite crossing disciplines, the issue has landed in the nebulous realm of morality: "[…] the use of the terms *life* and *choice* is caught in liberal American ideals of individuality,

autonomy, and self-responsibility, which work to obscure abortion's entanglement in larger questions of race, eugenics, biopolitics, and, of course, gender" (2–3). In order to disentangle the rhetorical moves of the contemporary abortion debate, we need to recognize that abortion discourse is bound up in a version of liberalism that, despite valuing "the autonomous, self-reliant, individual citizen who singular rights must be protected above all" (6), premises protection by the state on "recognizing only certain forms of life and only under certain conditions" (7).

To my mind, Weingarten's method of recognizing the limitations of liberalism's relationship to reproductive rights is the strongest feature of the book. Throughout, she tracks instances of the way abortion rhetoric is used to discipline women's bodies and how this alters and affects their participation in American life. Weingarten proves that white women "were disciplined into viewing their bodies as national vessels for reproduction and believing that disrupting this process was against the nation-state and their race" (19). One solid piece of evidence to this effect is her reading of *The Great "Trunk Mystery"* from 1871, a dime novel that sensationalized the story of a white girl found in a trunk on a Chicago train after she died from a botched abortion. The case, Weingarten argues, "made explicit the new collusion between those who explicitly care for the biological needs and those who govern those bodies through the forces of law" (25), as well as exposing the way antiabortion advocates used the racial markers of usually foreign abortion doctors to emphasize threat to the survival of white America.

Weingarten aptly continues this idea of the threat to white America in the next two chapters that focus on morality, eugenics, and population control. The chapter entitled "The Inadvertent Alliance of Anthony Comstock and Margaret Sanger" is my favorite for two reasons: it reframes the sociopolitical narratives of two famous, controversial, and very different figures in turn-of-the-century debates about sexuality in surprising and productive ways; and it establishes the principles for Weingarten's adept literary readings of popular novels and their subsequent films in Chapter Three, further framing how political and legal discourse produced new, competing social realities for women. Weingarten names Comstock's obsession with "responsibilization," or the ethic that "reproduction can be controlled through generating particularized knowledge about what constitutes responsible behavior" (50) as a disciplining device for white, middle-class women. In what may seem like a leap to some, Weingarten proves that Sanger's antiabortion rhetoric was also a disciplining device, though framed through her eugenicist tendencies for "the need for the 'cleaner,' better-'controlled' form of birth control that would ultimately lead to a better human race" (64).

In a time when there are daily threats to women's reproductive rights, Weingarten's *Abortion in the American Imagination* is prescient and needed, reminding us all to question our discursive assumptions about a notoriously divisive issue. It joins only few other studies of the same nature that boldly examine such a contentious issue—namely, Heather Latimer's *Reproductive Acts: Sexual Politics in North American Fiction and Film* (2013) and Leslie Regan's groundbreaking *When Abortion was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973*

(1998). Weingarten stays grounded in the scholarship, making a sophisticated and nuanced plea for us to reexamine how we approach issues of life and choice and their complicated discursive associations.

Jill E. Anderson Tennessee State University

AFRICA IN FLORIDA: Five Hundred Years of African Presence in the Sunshine State. Edited by Amanda B. Carlson and Robin Poynor. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2014.

*Africa in Florida* offers a fresh perspective on U.S. History, American Cultural Studies and scholarship about the African Diaspora. Originally based on a student-curated exhibit at the University of South Florida (2001), the work evolved in response to the erasure of the African and Native American presence in the 2013 celebration of 500 years of Spanish heritage to honor Ponce de Leon's landing on the Florida coast. The editors of this volume are Africanist art historians who emphasize spatial knowledge and visual images as the lens through which to grapple with established categories of knowledge that tend to separate European, African, and Native American experience while challenging the standard narrative that reduces the story of Africans in Florida to one of slavery in the "deep south." Accordingly, the contributors offer a "new way of looking" at Florida that goes beyond the nineteenth-century notion of Florida as untouched nature and the twentieth-century notion of Florida as a fantasy world. The editors contend that this approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how and why individuals in Florida situate themselves in relation to Africa (as an idea or as place) and the importance of the African influence on personal, local, state, and national histories.

A comprehensive volume that spans from African ethnicities in the colonial era to neo-Yoruba iconography in Florida today, the work is divided into five sections. Part I introduces Africa in Florida by way of geography, an overview of historical themes, and the work of visual artists Adrian Castro and Gordon Bleach who explore what it means to cross the Atlantic and re-imagine home as Africans in Diaspora. Part II, "Seeking Freedom in and out of Florida: Slaves and Maroons," deals with the problem of slavery and freedom from various perspectives including the relationship between Florida's maroon communities and Seminole Indians and the migration of free blacks to Veracruz. One essay deals with the porous nature of the Florida-Georgia frontier for fugitive slaves seeking refuge as well as for smugglers and slave catchers engaged in the illegal slave trade. Part III examines the formation of new identities by considering Africanisms in African American cemeteries, cultural survivals in anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston's writings on black life, and the legacy of Mother Laura Adorkor Kofi, a female Garveyite. Part IV considers contemporary mechanisms that situate Africa in Florida through streams of Caribbean migration. The authors write about Afro-Cuban art and religion in Miami including the formation of Abakuá communities among Cubans in exile and the artistic tradition of Orisha-inspired Lucumi (Yoruba-Cuban) crown makers. Finally, Part V, entitled "(Re) making Africa in Florida," explores the work of carver Baba

Onabamiero Ogunleye, Orisha veneration in Florida, a sacred "Neo-Yoruba" site near Crescent City, Igbo Masquerades in Florida, and the history of exotic representations of Africa in amusement parks that are critical to the state's tourism industry.

*Africa in Florida* is a massive volume that can feel overwhelming in its breadth and in its interdisciplinary perspective. Nevertheless, the editors succeed in creating a work that brings together scholars with artists, poets, and priests. This approach advances a needed dialogue between scholars of the African Diaspora and those who are engaged in cultivating these connections by remembering the relationship of African people to the state's history and reimagining the inter-relationship between Africans and Floridians. While this work offers an important contribution to our understanding of U.S. history and culture, it is less effective in engaging how continental Africans understand African identities and cultural practices in the state. The essays by Rey on African influence on religion in Miami and Carlson on Igbo masquerades briefly address recent waves of African immigration and its implications for challenging the idea of Africa in Florida. What do Yoruba, Igbo, or Central African immigrants make of these Caribbean inspired African cultural retentions? Is there space for interaction between communities linked to Africa through the U.S. South and the Caribbean with new arrivals of Africans living in Diaspora? *Africa in Florida* is a welcome contribution to the literature on American Studies and studies of the African Diaspora for undergraduates, graduate students, scholars, and practitioners.

Hilary Jones Florida International University

THE DELECTABLE NEGRO: Human Consumption and Homoeroticism within US Slave Culture. By Vincent Woodard. New York: New York University Press. 2014.

*The Delectable Negro* explores American slave culture, revealing the fantasies, investments, and discourses that figure the black slave as consumable and desirable—both charged with homoeroticism. For Vincent Woodard, notions of cannibalism and consumption within slave culture have been overlooked by scholars, so this radical and incisive book disrupts our conventional readings of slavery as well as key literary and political texts. It should be noted here that Woodard died before this book was published; it is a shame that he could not see his daring work enter debate. Praise must go to Joyce and McBride, moreover, for their careful and attentive editorial work that made the publication of this text possible.

Woodard's study attends to the moment when "black masculinity, racial identity, homoeroticism, and a distinctive American appetite for black male flesh and soul congealed" (24). In chapter one, Woodard looks to the intersection and "correlation between the consumptive appetites of whites and the transatlantic slave trade" (30), reading various cultural co-ordinates together, including Olaudah Equiano's famous slave narrative. The next chapter describes the relation between slave degradation (often sexualized) and the master's sense of honour, which is catalysed through modes of consumption. In chapter three, Woodard attends to Frederick Douglass's

writings for he described slavery "more than anyone else has, as a cannibalistic institution" (95). The next chapter reads Harriet Jacobs's slave narrative through the gendered elements of consumptive desires. Taking the character of Luke as central to this argument, Woodard ultimately suggests that scholars of slavery need "to get beyond our theoretical aversions to gender and sex variance" (170) in this world and its literature. Chapter five circles around the figure of Nat Turner: the literal, literary, and metaphorical consumption of his body. Through a reading of William Styron's novel about Turner, the critiques of that book by black intellectuals, as well as James Baldwin's defence of it, Woodard mounts an argument about the way Turner's body is continually consumed. While the chapter is otherwise engaging and light-footed, Woodard problematically eschews an explicit critique of the homophobic and sexist opinions that saturate the attacks on Styron and his novel; I find this silence strange and counter to the larger concerns of this project. The final chapter optimistically locates "black self-fashioning and cultural formation within the eroticized male interior" (211). In excavating the black male interior—particularly through the site and figure of the anus—Woodard claims we can garner a better understanding of slavery's complex relation to the hunger of (and for) black men. While Woodard's male focus throughout the book is not a problem in itself, I wonder if this final chapter could have gestured more openly to the interiority of both male and female black bodies; for surely it is across genders and sexes that we will most richly understand the corporeal vicissitudes of slavery.

Woodard's book might be coordinated with contemporary scholarship such as Russ Castronovo's *Necro Citizenship* (2001), which looks to social death and slavery in nineteenth-century American culture or Michael Bibler's *Cotton's Queer Relations* (2009) which reads literary texts that restructure the plantation as a queer space. Both texts can illuminate further Woodard's interest in black bodies, male interiors, homoeroticism, and consumptive desires. Reading *The Delectable Negro* in relation to these works alone reveals the highly nuanced and exciting directions that critical works on slavery are moving. Woodard's career would surely have been even bolder after this book, but this text's interruption into critical theory alone is itself worth celebrating.

Christopher Lloyd University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

EDUCATED IN WHITENESS: Good Intentions and Diversity in Schools. By Angelina E. Castagno. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2014.

While its title is a bit misleading, this book examines schools undergoing social change, like many others in the United States. Castagno's treatment of these developments is under-theorized and offers a somewhat thin ethnographic account of the events at hand, but it does provide telling insights into apparently typical public schools. In the end, it is a somewhat revealing examination of how such institutions function to sustain existing relations of social class and ethnicity in American life.

Given its title, perhaps the most obvious problem is the book's conceptualization of whiteness in institutions such as schools. Castagno devotes just four pages

to this, much of it a quick review of various authors' viewpoints on the general question. She does discuss how whiteness can appear in an educational setting, but complicates the matter by linking it to "niceness," another theme in the study. Other theoretical constructs, such as cultural and social capital, are not even mentioned.

The setting is a school district in metropolitan Salt Lake City which has undergone considerable change. It now has a more ethnically diverse population than earlier, with most "non-white" students being Hispanic or non-Hispanic immigrants. Relatively few are African American, potentially compromising her treatment of race. She focuses on two high schools, although differences between them do not figure prominently in her conclusions.

Although Castagno does not state it clearly, whiteness appears to represent norms or expectations for appearance, behavior, and academic performance that are rarely, if ever, voiced explicitly. Instead, she suggests that it is concealed and subtly enforced by "niceness," often resulting in "hurtful" experiences for students but not exactly oppression. Teachers discussed differences in student performance by using terms such as "culture" and "learning styles" to denote distinct groups, but they rarely discussed race or ethnicity outright. In this way important underlying assumptions about children were often masked, and opportunities for achievement constrained. This, of course, is more harmful than merely hurtful.

Castagno has long been familiar with the district and started out to investigate multicultural education. The schools were supposedly leaders in this respect, but she discovered a celebration of diversity that ignored manifest evidence of inequity. In particular, English language learning students were segregated in one school and many other non-white students were tracked into less demanding classes programmatically. Some "colorblind" teachers had little tolerance for non-white students. Ruby Payne fostered deficit theories of low SES performance, and teachers readily accepted these ideas. Liberal ideology confounded more critical analyses of problems they faced.

These, of course, are familiar patterns of inequity, but Castagno suggests that whiteness was a factor in the background. She doubtless is right, but the case surely would have been stronger in a setting with more African American students. It will be left to yet other scholars to take up these themes in settings where they can be explored in even greater depth, with a bit more conceptual sophistication.

John L. Rury University of Kansas

FOURTH CITY: Essays from the Prison in America. Edited by Doran Larson. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. 2014.

The biggest book in the world right now is Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*, a book that is certainly "the right book for the right time" and of which all of the "right questions" are being asked. The most important of these questions are the variations on *to what end*? What will become of the various recommendations and insights this book offers?

Doran Larson's *Fourth City: Essays from the Prison in America* is likewise very much "the right book for the right time," asking all of the "right questions" about the American prison-industrial complex. We can presume that Larson's book will not be as big as is Piketty's, in no small part because while the latter's critique of capital accumulation is "sexy," Larson's book is, to quote one of his contributors, "unseemly" (134). But it is a necessary unseemliness, a discomfort that comes from being forced to confront vital questions that have material impact not just on the obviously implicated—the millions of Americans subject to the prison-industrial complex—but to those less obviously implicated, that is, all American citizens. In this case, those questions can be summarized in two terse "why" questions: Why did we allow this to happen?; and why, when we have so much at stake in prisons, do we ignore them so completely?

In broaching these questions, *Fourth City* is refreshingly direct about its intentions: to provide "first-person, frontline witness to the human experience of mass incarceration in the United States" (1). The book's title announces its intentions plainly, for, as Larson notes in his Introduction, "If gathered together in one place, incarcerated Americans would constitute the nation's fourth largest city—a city larger than Houston, Philadelphia, or Phoenix" (1). Having established the basic demographic metric, Larson turns next to an overview of the prison system as it is currently constituted. His introduction is thoughtful, comprehensive, and is itself an excellent contribution as, in part, a bibliographic essay on the state of the literature on "lockdown America," to borrow from Christian Parenti.

*Fourth City* is divided into two broadly thematic parts, the first on what we can call the "geographies" of prison city and the second on the "rationales" of prison city. The first part gives readers explanations of life within prisons—the dangers, the fear, the inhumanity and dehumanization, and the humanity and redemption that can occur in spite of the prison. The geographies here—personal; moral; of violence; of language, communication, behavior, and custom; of location and dislocation—are on full display, at least insofar as they can be when reduced to text and offered to a readership that presumably has at best only a meager frame of reference. They are also compelling, particularly on the crucial questions of distance that the writers reflect upon. These distances can be between the way the contributors see themselves now as opposed to before, the distance between them and the people they want to be or feel capable of becoming, between notions of rehabilitation and the dehumanization the prison demands, and, perhaps most pressingly, between prisoners and their families. Numerous essays also declare what several studies have shown, which is that the isolation from support networks that our contemporary prison-industrial complex relies on is one of the surest predictors of recidivism.

The second part presents the various rationales and regimes that govern prisons and prison life. These contributions cover the rationales that govern the lives of prisoners subject to racism within the institutions, sexual violence from other inmates and from corrections officers, and lack of access to mental and physical health care. Noting that a federal judge has declared that the lack of health care in California prisons amounts to "cruel and unusual punishment" (221), these sections

offer a variety of pieces that directly confront the question of, as the title of one piece asks, "Why Are We a Nation of Prisons?" (185). Why are we so invested in a system that is "invested in its own failure?" (179). Why are we so invested in a system that does such psychological harm to those we trust to run it? Why are we so invested in a system that is so capricious about who enters its doors, so irrationally selective about who reemerges from them, and has so little regard not only for those who will reemerge but the condition in which they will do so? Continuing many of the themes from the first section, particularly the various ruminations on distance, these chapters also reflect on what is necessary to bring about reforms sufficient to create a system that rehabilitates those men and women who want to and can be rehabilitated, while protecting society by cordoning off those who do not or cannot; that can distinguish between the two and provide the necessary support, education, and treatment; and the extent to which the prisoners, by their acquiescence to and ready adaptation to the behavioral regimes of the prison, are their own worst enemies.

Ultimately, the book is Larson and his contributors' plea that we recall that the prisons are of us; they are ours, and we bear some responsibility for them—for what goes on within them, and for those subject to them. As the book reminds us, we are all included in the last category in one way or another, for we are subject to the system that demands, sustains, and expands these prisons at the expense of all of us. We are also part of a society that has turned its back on prison education programs, for example, because of the cost and the unseemliness of the idea that prisoners have access to what "normal" citizens do not; this, as many of the contributions note, begs a series of other questions and gives added dimensions to declaration that the United States is a nation of prisons. Writing into the line that links the Gospels with Dostoyevsky with Thoreau with King, Larson and his contributors remind us of the need to reflect on how we treat our prisoners and how that reflects on us as a society. As necessary as it is unseemly, this is a book that asks the right questions at the right time and deserves a wide audience both within and outside of the academy. The biggest question of all, however, remains: To what end? What will we do with it?

Anthony Santoro Heidelberg University, Germany

THE INDICTED SOUTH: Public Criticism, Southern Inferiority, and the Politics of Whiteness. By Angie Maxwell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2014.

At the heart of white identity in the twentieth-century American South lay an enduring ostracism from the American norm, one whose roots extended to antebellum contention over politics and culture, and whose political and cultural manifestations defined southern whiteness in opposition to northern (read American) identity. The result was a regional inferiority complex marked by defensiveness and defiance and constructed against the standing indictment entailed in historically entrenched northern disapproval.

In her analysis of *The Indicted South*, Angie Maxwell argues that southern whiteness is historically distinct and, in its complexity, resists conflation with other conceptualizations of whiteness. "Southern whiteness," she writes, "is unique in the sense that it is constructed by oppressing a black 'other,' while serving paradoxically as the 'other' in the larger construct of American identity in the twentieth century…What began and continued to be a nonblack identity became, in effect, a nonnorthern, nonliberal, nonmodern, and nonscientific overdetermined whiteness" (22). The South's history of racial oppression remained a central aspect of white southern identity, to be sure, but Maxwell argues that the "unifying sense of inferiority" (4) in the face of northern disapproval gave shape to the oppositional elements of southern whiteness.

To make her point, Maxwell explores three broad and nuanced case studies that illustrate the oppositional posture of twentieth-century southern whiteness. In the book's first section, Maxwell examines the Scopes trial and the dynamic among William Jennings Bryan, defender of creationism, Clarence Darrow, defender of evolution, and H.L. Mencken, the Baltimore columnist whose antipathy for the South's rejection of science played to a national audience and typified northern condemnation of the South. Maxwell also discusses the founding of William Jennings Bryan College in Tennessee, which she defines as an act of reactionary fundamentalism.

Next, Maxwell examines the ways in which the Fugitive literary movement, started at Vanderbilt University in the 1920s by John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Donald Davidson, was first a reaction to the disparagement of the South that accompanied the Scopes trial and an attempt to prove that the South could in fact produce literary talent. As the group morphed into the Agrarians in the 1930s, their romanticizing of Southern life was a defensive response to the unrelenting Menckenesque critique of the South, and in their incarnation as the New Critics in the 1940s, the writers tried to remove the study of literature from historical context, an attempt to disassociate southern literature from the region's slaveholding past.

Finally, Maxwell discusses the sectionalism and reinvigorated sense of inferiority that followed the *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation decision. Focusing on the massive resistance movement in Virginia, led by newspaper editor James J. Kilpatrick, Maxwell draws a clear link between the states' rights claims of southern white conservatives in the 1950s, which defended segregation as a constitutional right, and later efforts to reaffirm white privilege through legal means that might be contrasted with overt racism. "It was, in effect, a polite, legalistic, and intellectual (or so many white southerners thought) racism, but no less violent in spirit," Maxwell writes. "The new enemies that Kilpatrick would engage—the expanding federal government, judicial activists, and the liberal media—remain definitive foes of contemporary southern conservatism" (171).

This study, which relies on a mix of primary and secondary sources, expands the canon on whiteness generally and brings new depth to research on southern whiteness. The book will be useful to scholars of twentieth–century southern and

civil rights history and literature, and can be assigned, in whole or by section, in a range of courses.

Gwyneth Mellinger Xavier University

NFL FOOTBALL: A History of America's New National Pastime. By Richard C. Crepeau. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2014.

The rise of the National Football League—from a ragtag group of often fly-by-night teams in the industrial towns of the Midwest to a global operation with nine billion dollars in annual revenue—is an incredible story. The NFL's many recent scandals, including player suicides, the racist mascot of the Washington team, and numerous domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, drunk driving, animal cruelty, and child abuse cases against both players and owners, have drawn additional interest and scrutiny. Among the recent wave of critical approaches to the league are Steve Almond's divorce from fandom *Against Football*, Thomas P. Oates and Zack Furness' edited volume *The NFL: Critical and Cultural Perspectives*, and Dave Zirin's many works on the subject, including *Bad Sports: How Owners are Ruining the Games We Love*.

Richard C. Crepeau's history is well-timed and provides an important backstory on the spectator sport that has become as much a national pastime as a political lightning rod. At times, Crepeau is overly colloquial, and he provides very little in terms of argument or original research. As the author acknowledges, the book is primarily a summary of secondary works, and it is organized as a straightforward narrative history with only minor thematic threads to guide chapters.

That said, *NFL Football* offers a fascinating lens through which to view some of the major themes of twentieth–century US history. For example, the league's early inclusion of African-American players (including Paul Robeson), its ban on black players in the 1930s at the behest of the Boston club (which then moved to Washington DC), and their re-introduction after World War II (with the exception of Washington, which remained all-white into the 1960s) show some of the lesser-known dynamics of the Jim Crow era from the perspective of the league, team owners, and players. The book also serves as a business history, illustrating the NFL's competitions with rival leagues including an eventual merger with the American Football League, and its labor practices, such as the punishment of players' union representatives and a general disregard for the health effects of its working conditions. One particularly disturbing study found professional football players twice as likely as the general population to die before age fifty.

What *NFL Football* lacks in new research, it makes up for with its usefulness. The book would work especially well as an introductory primer in an undergraduate course that uses a wealth of other scholarship to explore more specific themes, such as gender, race, health effects, commercials, mascots, public subsidies of stadia, and labor relations. *NFL Football* is quite readable, and Crepeau provides readers with the tools to begin unpacking some of professional football's many contradictions. While full of Cinderella stories, underdogs, and rags-to-riches tales, the NFL is also

a torchbearer for misogyny, violence, excess, exploitation, and a general lack of legal and social accountability. In short, it reflects the best and worst of American culture back to us, if only in highlights.

Dawson Barrett Del Mar College

PHILIP ROTH AND WORLD LITERATURE: Transatlantic Perspectives and Uneasy Passages. Edited by Velichka D. Ivanova. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press. 2014.

This important work seeks to explore the work of Philip Roth in world literature. In fact, it basically explores his work in the context of Eastern European literature, especially what was called "the other Europe" during the Cold War. There are the obligatory explorations of Roth as a Jewish author, and the equally obligatory demurrals about the difficulty of identifying just what exactly a Jewish author may be. Interestingly, no space is given in the book to a discussion of a key work germane to this issue, "Eli, the Fanatic." This short story offers insight into Roth's views on being Jewish in America. I find its absence interesting.

However, Ivanova's brilliant introduction does place Roth's work in its proper context both as the work of a Jewish-American writer and as one who fits into the broader Euro-American context. Indeed, it appears to me that his attempt to understand his ancestral Jewish-Czech background does, as Ivanova argues, inform his later work, including his edited series on works from "the other Europe," those countries behind the Iron Curtain. His annual returns do indeed offer an insight into his motives and interests, and his writing does increase in complexity as his experiences deepen. Indeed, I am surprised not to find a discussion or even a mention of "Deception," to my mind a brilliant gem in which Roth reflects on the Zuckerman as well as the European connections in his works, as well as his editing of "the other Europe" series, not to mention criticisms of his sexy works and a myriad of other issues.

A careful reading of these fine chapters makes that quite clear. There are four sections of the book. Each section takes on a different area of the Euro-American world. Thus, the book begins with a section entitled "American Precursors." To be honest, although I enjoyed the section, I am not sure exactly what it contributes to understanding Roth in a European context. It does place him within an American context, quite well. His Jewishness, as an outsider, is interestingly compared with Ralph Ellison's African-American sense of being "invisible." Also, placing him as an outsider in the New York liberal international circle is a very astute insight. It strengthens the understanding of the complexity of the man within the context of the complexity of his work. There is little doubt that Roth's popularity is not a result of his being an easy read. Rather, Roth was a great writer whose depth appears upon reflection as a number of the authors aver.

The following three sections examine Roth in various European contexts. Each is well-done. I think the section "The Experience of Prague and Central Europe" is the most interesting. Certainly, Roth viewed that area as holding a secret to understanding his own roots, as well as the key to understanding his parents and grand-

parents. He felt a strong kinship to the land and its writers. Thus, he returned there frequently. He mentions the experience and tries to explain it in "Deception," both to his fictional wife and his mistress. Along the way, he further blurs the areas between fact and fiction, and personal and created. He also tackles many criticisms of himself, which are leveled with the novella against his fictional avatar. It is no wonder that it is often difficult to unravel the traps Roth has set to baffle literary critics and his ordinary readers.

The authors in this work have done well in unraveling those traps. This is an extraordinary collection of material, one that rewards close and careful reading. Those who love Roth's works will be pleased with the detailed studies found here. Ivanova has not only contributed a remarkable opening essay, she has gathered a fine group of scholars to provide a careful and deeper understanding of Roth's place in Euro-American literature.

Frank A. Salamone Iona College

ROBERT CANTWELL AND THE LITERARY LEFT: A Northwest Writer Reworks American Fiction. By T.V. Reed. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 2014.

A concise literary biography of "proletarian" novelist Robert Cantwell adds significantly to the revisionist studies of early and mid–twentieth-century cultural radicalism. Rather than a detailed life story, Reed's book examines Cantwell's literary efforts through careful analysis of his non-fiction criticism and journalism, his short stories and major novels, his later unpublished works, and subsequent lapses into apolitical and even anti-communist posturing.

Notably, Reed details Cantwell's aesthetic theory, providing a counter-narrative to the traditional notion of the radical 1930s cultural field as a raft of simplistic formulas manufactured by Communist Party theoreticians. Despite, apparently, never joining the Communist Party, Cantwell's brief literary career is steeped in the political and cultural debates within and around the organizational orbit of Communist Party activists, such as the editorial board of *New Masses*. He stalwartly aligned himself, Reed argues, with a radical, Marxist analysis of capitalism and the Communist Party's theory and program for its overthrow.

With this affiliation in mind (and not *despite* it), Cantwell fashioned keen insights on the production of proletarian literature in the early 1930s. Influenced to a significant degree by the aesthetics of modernists like Henry James, James Joyce, and John Dos Passos, Cantwell elevated aesthetic concerns, but within a framework of social consciousness and collective action for progressive social change on the part of working-class people. Indeed, local workplace issues find "social causation," as Cantwell sought to describe the aesthetic effect in larger structural or global forces predicated in the logic of harmful, decaying capitalism.

Reed argues that Cantwell considered literary production as an imaginative structure comprised of often contradictory perspectives and ideologies, in which a dominant political outlook was but a single element. While Cantwell favored a dis-

tinction between art—specifically the practice and craft of artistic production—and politics, his own work, Reed shows, reflected his deliberate focus on the lives of working-class people that transformed them from passive, isolated individuals into class-conscious agents of social change.

Apart from details about Cantwell's troubled health and relationship to the informant Whitaker Chambers, one of Reed's most important discoveries in his study of Cantwell is the latter's identification of a "translation of process [that] occurs in moving any conceptual system or ideological position into literary form" (163). In other words, Reed has recovered a discarded radical writer who internalized Marxian concepts into his worldview (at least at the height of his literary powers), embedded in his own personal experience as a worker and with social reality, and developed a craft that allowed him to translate that internal world onto a page in an aesthetically pleasing way. Instead of applying a universal class concept couched in Marxian theory to all workers everywhere, Reed shows how Cantwell's fiction sought to leave "room for working class agency and for the specificity of local struggles" (78). This consideration of place adds a nuance to Cantwell's Marxism that emerges without the theoretical architecture of thinkers like Gramsci or David Harvey, and suggests more solid, sophisticated thinking in U.S. originated Marxism than is often considered. This element deserves its own scholarly agenda for those who would follow in Reed's footsteps.

Some dimensions of Reed's concluding chapter, in which he makes some broad claims about how the Communist Party, its leaders, and its supporters operated ideologically and organizationally, suggests a second new line of research that needs more detailed evidence than can be provided in this case study of Cantwell. Commentary here on the Communist Party's relationship to the Comintern and its changing and developing positions on politics in the U.S. is important, but seems intended to position the monograph's author politically rather than adding much in a scholarly way to a literary biography of a single non–Communist Party writer.

Considering the range of Communist Party official and unofficial involvement across geography, economic sectors, social and occupational strata, and identity affiliations, Reed's valuable insight into considerations of place might be applied to avoid overgeneralizations about the Communist Party as a homogeneous entity—even when it sought to present itself as such.

Joel Wendland Grand Valley State University

SETTLER COMMON SENSE: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance. By Mark Rifkin. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2014.

Mark Rifkin adds to his brilliant collection of work on settler colonialism by challenging the scholarly tendency to frame settler colonialism as a consistent, already made structure or set of logics that people today simply inhabit. Rifkin contends that settler colonialism is manifested through what he calls "settler common sense," the everyday feelings, sentiments, and practices that normalize the

disappearance of Indigenous peoples. Because this common sense is not always already in existence, but constantly made and remade, it can therefore be potentially unmade. However, argues Rifkin, it cannot be unmade by simply informing people about the truth of settler colonialism, because settler colonialism structures truth itself. Through deep and engaged reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *House of Seven Gables,* Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, and Herman Melville's *Pierre,* Rifkin argues that it is possible to see how settler colonial sense is constantly recreated even when Native peoples are not present in the text at all. For instance, he explores how the depictions of nature as "wild" consolidate the common sense understanding that property, and hence entitlement to land, is created through work that makes it no longer "wild"—work being something that Indigenous peoples are incapable of doing because they ontologically cannot create property.

Rifkin's work departs from similar texts in Native Studies that focus on the signification of the "figure of the Indian" by exploring how settler common sense is omnipresent whether or not the "figure of the Indian" is present. In this respect, his work echoes the work of Sarita See's *The Decolonized Eye*, who also reads Thoreau to explore how rendering nature has the effect of disappearing even the memory of Indigenous genocide. As Rifkin states, these texts are important, not so much to reveal what authors "think" about Natives, but what templates they provide for "the conditions of possibility" from which Indigenous life becomes im/possible (17). Rifkin further engages queer theory as a means to challenge settler, straight time in order to bring into being the potential disruption that could be effected through Indigenous presentness.

In this work, Rifkin, while not arguing that settler colonialism is completely separate from racism, nevertheless refuses to "foreground race as the primary modality through which to conceptualize processes of settlement" in order to "avoid analogy with African Americans as the means for approaching settler colonialism" (24). Since the publication of this book, new works (such as that by Tiffany Lethabo King and Maile Arvin) that address the interlocking *analytics* of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism within Indigenous Studies challenge this paradigm. This work demonstrates that anti-Blackness is a geopolitical project of settler expansion as well as a structuring logic of indigeneity itself. It further shows that analytically separating anti-Blackness from settler colonialism is an operation of anti-Blackness designed to make an anti-colonial Black struggle seem unthinkable. This work calls into question whether it is possible to analyze relationships between settler common sense and property, as Rifkin does, without an engagement of how anti-Blackness structures these relationships. Nonetheless, *Settler Common Sense* brilliantly explores how the "truth" of settler colonialism structures everything—from conceptions of property, to the concept of the city, to formulations of family, relationships and feeling, to time itself. It calls us to a project of what Rifkin terms "reorientation" that requires us to not simply understand the history of Indigenous genocide, but to transform our grid of intelligibility structured by settler colonialism.

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SEX AND THE FOUNDING FATHERS: The American Quest for a Relatable Past. By Thomas A. Foster. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. 2014.

Given the prominence of the Founding Fathers in popular and scholarly histories of the United States, an examination of over two hundred years of commentary on the sexual lives of six prominent Founders (Washington, Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris) should illuminate issues of national identity. Such is the project and promise of Thomas A. Foster's *Sex and the Founding Fathers: The American Quest for a Relatable Past*. "Americans," he writes, "increasingly need to know what is American and see themselves in that definition" (5). How we think and have thought about the sex lives of the Founders will, he believes, fulfill that need in great part.

A brief introduction (eight-and-a-half pages) is followed by six biographical chapters, a form selected to "engage with the construction of public memory. . .as well as to consider the ways that biography itself participates in defining manliness and appropriate sexualities more generally" (7). These are promises not kept. We get snapshots, so to speak, of different aspects of someone's reputation at different times, but very little about how these help us understand masculine identity configurations over time. Most importantly, Foster never demonstrates his most important claim: "how gendered sexuality has long figured in our national identity via the public memory" (9). Even as he shows the continuing interest in the "real lives" (2) of the Founders, he never demonstrates how this gendered sexuality has mattered to national identity. Understanding how power and/or authority are formed and operate is never so simple as to be taken for granted.

There are methodological problems as well. The selection process isn't described. Each merits inclusion as a Founder, though Morris's inclusion might raise an eyebrow, something acknowledged in a backhanded fashion by a statement that he "operates in the book as a prime example of how the connections between sex and manliness in cultural memory of the Founders are not limited to the top tier" (7). But in fact, it is his sexual frankness that gains him inclusion.

Another problem is that, while the book's theses invoke current scholarly discussions, the book seems directed at a reader who knows almost nothing about the Founders or the Revolutionary Era. How else to account for informing the reader that Jefferson "remarkably" died on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence (47), or for the biography of John Adams to conclude by noting the "coincidence" of his death on the same day (78). Moreover, the use of tags such as "best-selling author Joseph Ellis" (33) or "historian Gordon S. Wood," (97), et al. indicates a need to inform an unaware reader. What early Americanist has to be introduced to Gordon Wood or Joseph Ellis?

*Sex and the Founding Fathers* has value as a source of data. One has to respect the research that has gone into the book. The data raises important questions about gender, sexuality, and masculinity as normative and actual behaviors shift that over time as they structure personal and national identities. The work of answering these questions remains undone.

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